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ABSTRACT

Characteristics of the Japanese university and future issues, including the university's research role, are considered. More than 75 percent of university students and 91 percent of junior college students in Japan attend private institutions. Japanese universities are scattered unevenly geographically, and often they offer only certain fields of study. Many are in large urbanized areas and the majority of their students major in humanities and social sciences. In 1979 the number of graduate students was only three percent of the total college student population. Plans for independent graduate schools are being considered, especially in the field of science and technology, and the measures suggest that the degree system would be changed from certifying scholastic achievements to identifying research ability. The fact that Japanese universities are meant only for the Japanese is evidenced by the small number of foreign students (about 6,000) and foreign professors (940). It is suggested that there is a need for internationalization of the universities in Japan, which traditionally has been influenced by the hereditary system of society that emphasizes the common background of students and teachers. In Japan, half of the university budget is to be allotted to research. It is suggested that increased cooperation in research be undertaken. References are made to the higher education systems in other countries. (SW)

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JAPANESE UNIVERSITIES AND THE WORLD -- THEIR FEATURES AND TASKS*

The universities all over the world share common characteristics, but at the same time they inevitably project differences attributable to their varing national backgrounds. Common characteristics, which can well or better be replaced by the words "common ideal of the university", naturally have different shade of colours in accordance to the life in each nation.

In almost every country, the university as an educational institution has a long tradition compared with schools providing public education. Public education for the masses is one of the fruits of the modern educational system, whereas universities have had social importance in each historical period as means to provide education for the ruling class of society. The history of European Universities dates back to the Middle Age. The universities in Bologna and Paris have glorious tradition having been founded in the twelfth century. In Japan the first so-called university was established by the law of Tai-ho-ritu-ryo in 701. This university had four academic courses, namely, Chinese classic, music, calligraphy and mathematics, and doctors or the professors of each course educated students from ruling class. The institution was disappeared in Kamakura period.

University, in the context that it provides higher education in the society, has always been of the first priority to be established, and this is often seen in the developing countries, where they are intended for the future leaders in various fields. Thus, university has always been established exclusively as an educational institution for the elite, and the training of future leaders as the genuine function of the university has been its essential characteristic until today.

However, the expansion of the secondary education in the 1950s and the following expansion of the higher education led to the change in the characteristics of the university in the developed countries, being opened more to the common people. During the last fifty years, the secondary education which

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used to be a preparatory stage to the university, has lost its elite character and modified itself to the extended course of elementary education. Accordingly, universities are, in the midst of the trend of its popularization, now functioning partly as something like a higher popular education. In other words, contemporary universities are to play dual roles. They not only retain the characteristic as the institute for the elite education handed down from the old days, but now are given an additional role for popular education for the mass, a role originated quite differently. These two incompatible characteristics create very difficult problems of today's universities. This is common to most of the countries and emerges similar problems all over the world.

1. Features of the Japanese University

Japan now has 443 universities, 518 junior colleges and 62 junior technical colleges, where 1.83 million, 370 thousands and 46 thousands students are enrolled respectively, totalling to 2.26 million. A tremendous leap has achieved compared to the days when the new university system started thirty years ago with only 350 thousand students. This rapid expansion is often regarded as a very unique phenomenon of the modern Japanese universities which modelled after the American system, but this is not true. West Germany and France with half the Japanese population have as many as 870 thousands(1976) and 840 thousands(1977) university students respectively. The ratio, therefore, is more or less the same. The USA has 9.6 million(1976) and UK has 260 thousand(1975) students.

When we look at the expansion of the Japanese universities, there is no specific difference with other countries as far as the increase in number of students is concerned, but its structure is noteworthy as described below.

1.1 Overwhelming Existence of Private Institutions

Referring to the ratio of students, the fact that more than 75% of university students and 91% of junior college students, that is, in total, about 80% of all the students of higher education institution in Japan belong to private institutions, can be identified as the most peculiar phase of Japanese higher education compared to other developed countries.

In Europe, excluding some institutions connected to the religious foundations, most of the universities are financed and managed by the public bodies,

namely, the central government in France and State in Germany. British universities are ordained by the charter and function as if they are private independent institutions, but the fact is they are also public, being supported by the government.

In the USA nearly 3/4 of 9.6 million students go to universities and colleges run by states or by other public organizations, while the number of students belonging to the private universities is much less although not a few of these private universities are very prominent. Thirty years back when Japanese new school system started, the ratio of the public universities and private ones was about fifty-fifty both in the US and in Japan. Since then, American higher education expanded in the public sphere, whereas in Japan it happened in the private sector, hence came the big difference mentioned above. But why did a system and its copy get so varied later on? Obviously the cause can be sought in different understanding on the university, which were reflected in the course of their developments.

In the former, the project of expansion of the university both in quality and quantity was considered as a public task of the whole society, while in the latter the public bodies were considered to be responsible only for the training of future leaders, and these differences in the way of thinking lead to those results. Then why did not Western Europe see the same phenomenon having had the concept that the universities are exclusively for the elite? Apparently, because they have never thought of putting academci institution other than to the public hand with the exception of religious bodies, which are not recognized as what are called private.

1.2 Uneven Placement and Unbalanced Arrangement of Specialized Fields

Japanese universities are scattered unevenly geographically, and often they offer only certain fields of study. This tendency is more or less a product of the fact that the majority of the universities are private. Because many of them are in big urbanized areas and majority of their students major in humanities and social sciences.

1.3 Underdeveloped Graduate Schools

The problems mentioned in the previous paragraph may not be so vital for the university education, but the limited number of students at the graduate

schools is a serious phenomenon which calls upon immediate measures for improvement. In 1979 the number of graduate students was only 53,000, which is only three per cent of the total student population. This ratio is much less than 23% of England and 19% of France, not to say of the USA, where more than 1.2 million (15%) graduate students are enrolled. A conference document prepared by OECD in 1979 reveals that the number of students at the age of 24 reached more than ten percent of the same age bracket in West Germany and USA and several percent of the age population of 25 years old are still studying at the institutions. It is only 1.3 percent in the case of Japanese students at the age of 22 years and impossible to rate at the age of 24.

This is because at the innovation of the educational system in the post-war Japan, previous rather German type education system was switched to American system with much emphasis on the undergraduate education and no specific efforts to create substantial graduate schools were made. The already popularized undergraduate school was transplanted from the USA to Japan as a model for a new university, and the graduate school, as a place to train the future leaders in various fields of the society, was introduced only nominally and superficially without enough teaching staff nor facilities.

The establishment of new pattern university in the post-war period made the substantial development of graduate school remain as a task to be completed in the years to come.

Recently, plans for the independent graduate schools are being discussed especially in the field of science and technology. Legislative measures have been taken to encourage this trend toward the independent graduate school of an educational as well as research institution. The measures also suggest that the degree system would be changed from a system to certify the scholastic achievements to that of identifying the leadership in the society with research ability. However, university people still seem to feel more attached to the undergraduate school, having in mind that the graduate school is exclusively for the university researchers. The graduate students, though still minority, already face "over-doctor" problem (some of the post doctorals are suffering from unavailability of post suitable to their study in Japan), which clearly stems from the lingering old conception.

The graduate schools need to be re-examined fundamentally in the method of student selection, teaching contents, research apprenticeship method, and

the whole educational and teaching system. They should enhance their potential functions so as to offer research opportunities for future leaders and people in service in many fields of the society. If we fail to improve the present system, our situation without elite education might become worse in future.

1.4 Internationally Closed Society

The fact that Japanese universities are meant only for the Japanese and not open to the international society is well symbolized by the small number of foreign students (about 6,000 in total) and foreign professors (940 in number). This is a big problem for which university alone is not responsible but the whole society as well, and we should admit that the academic institutions must be the most internationalized organs in our society.

Putting aside the language and various social problems in receiving foreign guests, universities are expected as their own task to improve their graduate school education and its doctoral system to be more acceptable at the international level. In the present international society, one can hardly get highly professional position without doctor's or at least measter's degree.

In this respect, internationalization of the graduate school system is considered very important. The educational programme in graduate school should be improved so that it can meet the needs of those who will work in the international society on the one hand, and efforts to make the value of degree given in Japanese graduate school recognize widely in the international society are to be made on the other. Otherwise, not only the able Japanese might lose chances to engage actively in the international society but also it might respond unsufficiently to the expectations of foreign students studying in Japan.

The need of internationalization of university in Japan does not refer only to the issue of student. It also requires to open the gate of teaching staff. It can be said that the traditional constitution of Japanese university to form a circle of teaching staff by the graduates of same school makes the university closed.

In such a manner, the Japanese university has the peculiar character both in student as well as teaching staff compositions and forms a hereditary society. This characteristic also penetrates into the enterprises and it is by no means

easy to reform such social mentality, yet, this reformation is of vital importance when we look to the future for the survival of our nation in the international society. We have to begin breaking the closed behavioural patterns in the field of educational research.

The hereditary system of society to compose of people from the same background is widely known to have yielded strong competitive power in the international society to Japanese industries, but it is rather doubtful whether it has always been righteous and helpful in the leveling up of the academic standard of Japanese university in comparison to the other foreign ones. Especially in this trend of popularization, when the universities are transformed to be so called a popular higher education, the influence of this closedness in the field of educational research over the future of the universities where competitive principle does not work as it does in the general market of economics, is hard to overlook.

2. Future Task

So far, I have stated several characteristics of Japanese universities together with their future prospects. Now, I will discuss some of the problems to be solved in view of the future prospects.

2.1 Future of Higher Education

In every country, being influenced directly by the economic problems following the oil crisis, the ratio of university applicants stays on the same level and the finance of the universities declined. These were pointed out by many university presidents at the 7th General Assembly of the International Association of the Universities (with the affiliation of 720 universities. General Assembly being held every five years. The fourth assembly was in Tokyo in 1965) held in Manila from August 25, 1980 for a week. Especially in the developing countries, it was stated, universities are suffering 20% to 30% cut of expenditure while having to accept a certain number of freshmen as before.

In general, it seemed that every university president was not confident in stating the future prospect of the university because of the changing view on the universities. The questions we share are, for example: (1) Is it

sufficient to guarantee the equal opportunity in university applicant? Or should we further consider the equality in the selection of applicants? (2) What is "an equal treatment" of the students? and (3) Could we assess a student's ability by the objective tests? How could we evaluate his creativity or aesthetic talent? Thus, we have too many questions which are difficult to be answered.

One urgent problem to be solved was presented by the representatives of USA, USSR and East Germany, where the growing number of adults and aged citizens are entering universities. They also emphasized that in order to give more chances for the workers in service, the system of "Open University" should be re-considered not as a mere substitute to the present universit,, but as an organ with a genuine purpose of its own. It was made clear that already fifteen Open Universities have been established during the last decade throughout the world.

The discussions made at the General Assembly of IAU will be of meaningful reference to the future education of our country. The willingness and the need for learning from the public side will never diminish but only increase. University should respond sincerely to this public need. The conventional ideas or methods may not suffice. To offer higher education to the public at large, earlier establishment of Broadcasting University and new approaches to the extension courses university should be sought out immediately.

2.2 Establishment of Research System

Japanese universities, especially pre-war national universities, have had been well equipped and fulfilled for their mission as research institution. Therefore, the basic scientific researches were carried out at the undergraduate schools and tne laboratories and other research institutes were set up inside universities in order to catch up the new trends in the academic fields. Germany and France took different measures, i.e. independent research institutes like Max Planck Institutes, CERNS and other research institutes for fundamental science were established outside universities.

Recently university education has been rapidly popularized on the one hand, but on the other, the university is expected to provide highly specialized and advanced researches at the same time. Under such situation, it is clear that

the fulfilment of research capacity of each university should be consolidated beyond the boundaries of universities to cooperate for the maintenance of the level of the quality of researches and for the better results. Quite recently, some of the research laboratories attached to the national universities have been designated to be available for common use and the number of such laboratories is increasing. The newly established institutes like High Energy Physics Institute take the form of independent institute from any of the specific universities.

Since the size of the research organizations and research methodology vary depending upon the fields of study, we cannot discuss all of them in the same terms, but it is needless to mention that the systems of the research activity have to be fulfilled separately from the popularized higher education. Humanities and social sciences also need to undertake joint studies of various forms locally as well as internationally.

All this is based upon the very nature of the academic research and therefore, it is expected to endeavour to overcome the closedness of university.

In reality, however, it is generally recognized that education and research are inseparable and the academic research structure in Japan has been viewed likewise. Consequently, as the number of universities grow, the research institutes, researchers and research subsidies are increased as well. In 1979 it was said that there were total of 340 thousand researchers and 4,000 billion yen was offered for research, out of which 153 thousand researchers and 1,150 billion yen were for the universities. In Japan, the size of research staff is grasped by that of teaching staff and hals of the university budget is to be allotted as research fund. As a consequence, bizarre result came out that since private universities have more staff (72,000), they spend more expenditure (570 billion yen) than national institutions. In natural science for example, the research expense per scholar was 11.89 million yen in 1977, which is only half of that of the USA and 1/3 of France and West Germany.

But in turn, each Japanese researcher is blessed by the equally divided research allowance which he can use at his decision. In this respect, he is more fortunate than the American researcher who have to strive hard to get research fund of their own.

As far as the education and research are considered inseparably, Japanese universities may fail to facilitate truely appropriate scientific policy and top-level research system ahead of the rest of the world.

I believe that we should put importance on the development of graduate schools and laboratories beyond university boundaries, so as to build an "Universal University" where scholars and students from all over the world can get together and work together.

Appendix School Education Statistics

1. Number of Educational Institutions

year	Kinder-garten	Elementary School	Lower Secondary School	Upper Secondary School	Technical College	Junior College	University	Miscel-laneous School
1951	2,455	26,056	13,836	4,477	-	180	230	5,144
1960	7,207	26,858	12.986	4,598	-	280	245	8,089
1970	10,796	24,790	11,040	4,798	60	479	382	8,011
1979	14,627	24,899	10,746	5,135	62	518	443	7,895*

2. Number of Students

year	Kinder-garten	Elementary School	Lower Secondary School	Upper Secondary School	Technical College	Junior College	University	Miscel-laneous School
1951	244,423	11,422,992	5,129,482	2,193,362	-	36,331	313,158	610,912
1960	742,367	12,590,680	5,899,973	3,239,416	-	83,457	626,421	1,239,621
1970	1,674,625	9,493,485	4,716,833	4,231,542	44,314	263,219	1,406,521	1,352,686
1979	2,486,608	11,629,110	4,966,972	4,484,870	46,187	373,996	1,864,358	1,187,397*

3. Number of Full-time Teaching Staff

year	Kinder-garten	Elementary School	Lower Secondary School	Upper Secondary School	Technical College	Junior College	University	Miscel-laneous School
1951	9,245	313,513	181,184	91,603	-	2,956	17,475	18,272
1960	31,330	360,660	205,988	131,719	-	6,394	44,434	36,688
1970	66,579	367,941	224,546	202,440	3,245	15,320	76,275	48,175
1979	100,331	459,580	246,146	237,637	3,713	16,208	100,735	46,776*

4. Number of Students per Full-time Teaching Staff

year	Kinder-garten	Elementary School	Lower Secondary School	Upper Secondary School	Technical College	Junior College	University	Miscel-laneous School
1951	26.4	36.4	28.3	23.9	-	12.3	17.9	33.4
1960	23.7	34.9	28.6	24.6	-	13.1	14.1	33.8
1970	25.1	25.8	21.0	20.9	13.7	17.2	18.4	28.1
1979	24.8	25.3	20.2	18.9	12.4	23.1	18.3	25.4*

5. Higher Education**

year	Number of Institutions	Number of Students	Number of Full-time Teaching Staff
1951	383	349,489	20,431
1960	525	709,878	50,828
1970	930	1,685,284	94,915
1979	1,025	2,237,602	120,667

Source: Monbu Tokei Yoran (Statistical Report, Ministry of Education), 1980, Tokyo

* Including Special Schools

** Including Universities, Junior Colleges, National Training Institute for Nursing Teachers, National Training Institute for Engineering Teachers, and Technical Colleges (Students of 4th and 5th year).